UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL jc**598** (Small Entity)

Docket No. **MBI-1008US**

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Total Pages in this Submission

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

Box Patent Application

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Abstract of the Disclosure

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Small Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No. **MBI-1008US**

Total Pages in this Submission

Application Elements (Continued)

3	i. I	X	Drawing(s) (when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)
		a.	☐ Formal b. ☑ Informal Number of Sheets3
4	l .	X	Oath or Declaration
1		a.	☐ Newly executed (original or copy) ☑ Unexecuted
		b.	☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional application only)
٠,		C.	☑ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
And the same of		d.	DELETION OF INVENTOR(S) Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
	5.		Incorporation By Reference (usable if Box 4b is checked) The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
(6.		Computer Program in Microfiche
	7.		Genetic Sequence Submission (if applicable, all must be included)
		a.	Paper Copy
		b.	. Computer Readable Copy
		C.	Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy
			Accompanying Application Parts
	8.		Assignment Papers (cover sheet & documents)
	9.		37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee)
1	10.		English Translation Document (if applicable)
,	11.		Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 Copies of IDS Citations
	12.		Preliminary Amendment
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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Small Entity)

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Docket No. MBI-1008US

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BOTTLE RACK

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention pertains generally to the field of infant feeding and care. More specifically, this invention relates to an improved apparatus for storing and drying infant nursing bottles, nipples and rings that is more hygienic, efficient and attractive than articles that are presently available for similar purposes, and that is more convenient to store for consumers.

2. <u>Description of the Related Technology</u>

The importance of proper hygiene when handling and cleaning infant feeding equipment such as baby bottles and nursing nipples cannot be overstated. Ideally, bottles and nipples should be thoroughly scrubbed, then sterilized by immersion in boiling water between uses. At the very least, baby bottles and components thereof, which typically include rings, nipples, hoods and disks, must be washed with an effective detergent and dried in a location that is separated from dirty water or potential contaminants prior to storage for future use.

Drying racks for holding baby bottles, rings and nipples after washing are commercially available. For example, such products are sold by Safety 1st, Inc. as a "Bottle and Nipple Drying Rack," and by Mommy's Helper, Inc. as a "Drain 'N Dry." Both of these products are characterized by a plastic tray that has a number of socket recesses defined in a top face thereof. Plastic pegs are provided that are insertable into the socket recesses. Some of the plastic pegs are relatively long, for supporting a bottle, while others are shorter, for supporting nipples, rings and caps. Neither these products nor any other drying rack of which the inventors are aware have any way of storing the disks of a baby bottle in a sanitary location after washing.

Although products of the type described above are quite useful, the lack of disk storage forces conscientious caregivers to separate baby bottle components after washing and rinsing, which can be frustrating and can result in mix-ups between disks that have been washed and

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unwashed disks. In addition, the sockets that are defined in the top faces of such products can collect water and become points of nucleation for bacteria and mold growth. Furthermore, assembly and disassembly of these products can be laborious, with the need to insert multiple pegs in matching sockets and having to figure out which peg to place in each socket. These products are not convenient to store for a consumer, unless they are completely disassembled. In households that have toddlers, such racks can quickly unbeknownst to the caregiver become a plaything, and pegs can be pulled from the sockets, creating more work and frustration for the caregiver, possibly presenting a risk of injury.

A need exists for a bottle rack that requires minimal or no assembly by the user, that provides a secure and sanitary drying location for all baby bottle components, that minimizes the potential for mold and bacteria growth during use and is easy to store.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide a bottle rack that requires minimal or no assembly by the user, that provides a secure and sanitary drying location for all baby bottle components, that minimizes the potential for mold and bacteria growth during use and that is easy to store.

In order to achieve the above and other objects of the invention, an apparatus for drying and storing an article, such as a baby bottle includes a tray having a bottom face that is adapted to be supported by an underlying surface such as a counter-top, and an upper face; and a plurality of pegs extending outwardly from the upper face, each of the pegs being sized and arranged so as to be able to support an article, such as a baby bottle, and wherein each of the pegs are permanently mounted to the tray in such a manner as to be movable between a first storage position, wherein the entire peg is positioned relatively close to the upper face for storage and packaging of the apparatus, and a second, operative position, wherein the peg is positioned at a large angle with respect to the upper surface, so as to enable the peg to support an article such as a baby bottle, wherein the apparatus can conveniently be folded for packaging and storage purposes.

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According to a second aspect of the invention, an apparatus for drying and storing an article, such as a baby bottle, includes a tray having a bottom face that is adapted to be supported by an underlying surface such as a counter-top, and an upper face; bottle support means for supporting a baby bottle; and disk holding structure, connected to the upper face of the tray, for holding baby bottle disks in a location that is isolated from areas of the tray in which liquid may collect, whereby baby bottle disks are dried and stored in a safe manner at a location that is convenient to a location at which baby bottles are being dried.

These and various other advantages and features of novelty that characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed hereto and forming a part hereof. However, for a better understanding of the invention, its advantages, and the objects obtained by its use, reference should be made to the drawings which form a further part hereof, and to the accompanying descriptive matter, in which there is illustrated and described a preferred embodiment of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of an apparatus that is constructed according to a preferred embodiment of the invention, shown in an operative position;

FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIGURE 1, shown in a storage position;

FIGURE 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 3-3 in FIGURE 1; and FIGURE 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 4-4 in FIGURE 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate corresponding structure throughout the views, and referring in particular to FIGURE 1, an apparatus 10 for drying and storing an article, such as a baby bottle, after washing and rinsing includes a tray 12 having a bottom face 14 (viewable in FIG. 3) that is adapted to be supported by

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an underlying surface such as a countertop. Tray 12 further has an upper face 16, as may be seen in FIGURES 1-4. Tray 12 is further configured to have a number of cutout/grip areas 58 defined in sides thereof, as may best be seen in FIGURE 1. The purpose of the cutout area 58 is to permit a consumer to more easily lift the apparatus 10 during use, as well as to prevent vapor lock from occurring between the apparatus 10 and a smooth underlying surface such as a countertop. In the preferred embodiment, a cutout area 58 is positioned on each side of the apparatus 10, as well as on the rear end thereof.

As is best shown in FIGURES 1 and 2, apparatus 10 further includes a plurality of pegs 18 that extend outwardly from the upper face 16 of tray 12. Each of the pegs 18 is sized and arranged so as to be able to support an article, such as a baby bottle, after washing and rinsing.

According to one important aspect of the invention, each of the pegs 18 are permanently mounted to the tray 12 in such a manner as to be moveable between a first storage position, which is illustrated in FIGURE 2, wherein the entire peg 18 is positioned relatively close to the upper face 16 for storage and packaging, and a second, operative position, illustrated in FIGURE 1, wherein the pegs 18 are positioned at a large angle with respect to the upper surface 16. This mounting arrangement is made possible by a permanent mounting structure 20, which is best illustrated in FIGURES 1, 3 and 4, and which will be discussed in greater detail below. The permanent mounting structure 20, as will become apparent from the description given below, is constructed in such a way that no standing water may collect at a point where a peg 18 is mounted, thereby minimizing potential for mold and bacterial growth. Permanent mounting structure 20 is further constructed so as to constrain the pegs 18 for movement about only a single axis of rotation.

As may be seen in FIGURE 1, apparatus 10 further includes a number of nipple support members 32 that are constructed and arranged to support a nipple portion of a baby bottle after washing and rinsing. The nipple support members 32 are, in a manner that is substantially identical to that of the pegs 18, mounted by means of a permanent mounting structure 20 for movement between a first storage position, where the entire nipple support member 32 is

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positioned relatively close to the upper face 16 for storage and packaging purposes, and a second, operative position where the nipple support member 32 is positioned at a large angle with respect to the upper face 16. In other words, the mounting structure 20 for the pegs 18 is substantially identical to that of the nipple support members 32. The nipple support members 32 have stylized stops 48, which in the preferred embodiment are styled as hearts, mounted thereon for supporting rings or small bottles above the surface of tray 12.

Looking again to FIGURE 1, it will be seen that in the illustrated embodiment of the invention four pegs 18 are constrained for common, ganged movement in an arc about a common axis of rotation that is created by a first axle 22. Similarly, a second four pegs 18 are mounted for common movement with a second axle 24. Four nipple support members 32 are mounted for common movement about a third axle 28, while a second four nipple support members 32 are mounted for common movement with a fourth axle 30. In the preferred embodiment, the axles 22, 24, 28, 30 are substantially parallel, and therefore define arcuate paths of movement for the various pegs 18 and nipple support members 32 that are located within substantially parallel planes. This permits the various pegs 18 and nipple support members 32 to move between the first and second positions, as represented by FIGURES 2 and 1, respectively, with a minimum of interference with each other.

Looking now to FIGURE 3, it will be seen that each axle 22, 24, 28, 30 includes a journal 38 that extends through a mounting hole that is defined in a sidewall 36 of an upstanding dam 34 that is formed along the periphery of the upper face 16 of the tray 12. A significant vertical distance exists between the bottom of the mounting hole and the top face 16 of the tray 12, so that water cannot escape through the mounting holes onto an underlying surface during normal use of the apparatus 10. This mounting structure 20 is arranged in such a way so as to constrain the axle 22, 24, 28, 30 for movement about an axis of rotation 40, as is shown in FIGURE 3.

Mounting structure 20, by ganging adjacent pegs 18 and adjacent nipple support members 32 together by use of a common axle, thereby imparts lateral stability to the pegs 18

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and the nipple support members 32, further deterring any motion other than about the single axis of rotation 40.

As may best be seen in FIGURES 1 and 4, each axle 22, 24, 28, 30 includes at least one locating structure 26, the purpose of which is to lock the respective axle in a rotational position that corresponds to the second operative position shown in FIGURE 1. In the illustrated embodiment, first and second axles 22, 24 include two such locating structures 26, while the third and fourth axles 28, 30 which support the shorter nipple support members 32, are equipped with but one locating structure 26. The construction of the locating structures 26, however, is uniform throughout the four axles 22, 24, 28, 30. As may be seen in FIGURE 4, locating structure 26 includes a cam member 43 having a lower surface 44 that is constructed and arranged to bear against the upper face 16 of tray 12, and a forward surface 46 that is constructed and arranged to come into contact with a rear surface 44 of a cam stop 42 that projects upwardly and is unitary with the upper face 16 of tray 12. FIGURE 1 and FIGURE 4 both depict the locking structure 26 in the second, operative position. The path between the first and second positions is indicated in FIGURE 4 by arrow 46. The nipple support member 32 is prevented from bending backwardly in the direction away from the first storage position by contact of the forward surface 46 of cam member 43 with the rear surface 44 of cam stop 42.

If it is desired to move the nipple support member 32 from the second, operative position shown in FIGURE 1 to the first storage position shown in FIGURE 2, a user will push the nipple support member 32 in the desired direction. Initially, this movement will be deterred by the contact of the lower surface 44 and the leading edge of the lower surface with the upper face 16 of tray 12. Once the leading edge 45 has cleared the upper face, however, the nipple support member 32 will easily fold down into the position that is shown in FIGURE 2.

According to another important aspect of the invention, apparatus 10 further includes a disc holding system 50 for holding baby bottle discs in a location that is isolated from areas of the tray 12 in which liquid may collect. This allows baby bottle discs to be dried and stored in a safe manner at a location that is convenient to a location at which baby bottles are being dried. In

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the preferred embodiment, disc holding system 50 includes an upstanding boss member 52 that projects upwardly from the upper face 16 of tray 12 and has a plurality of disc receiving slots 54 defined therein. Boss member 52 and slots 54 are raised with respect to an underlying reservoir 56 that is located in the forward portion of tray 12. As an added benefit, the reservoir space also acts as a finger space area for a user to get his/her fingers beneath the disc members for lifting them out after drying.

It is to be understood, however, that even though numerous characteristics and advantages of the present invention have been set forth in the foregoing description, together with details of the structure and function of the invention, the disclosure is illustrative only, and changes may be made in detail, especially in matters of shape, size and arrangement of parts within the principles of the invention to the full extent indicated by the broad general meaning of the terms in which the appended claims are expressed.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for storing an article, such as a baby bottle, comprising:

a tray having a bottom face that is adapted to be supported by an underlying surface such as a counter-top, and an upper face; and

a plurality of pegs extending outwardly from said upper face, each of said pegs being sized and arranged so as to be able to support an article, such as a baby bottle, and wherein

each of said pegs are permanently mounted to said tray in such a manner as to be movable between a first storage position, wherein said entire peg is positioned relatively close to said upper face for storage and packaging of said apparatus, and a second, operative position, wherein said peg is positioned at a large angle with respect to said upper surface, so as to enable said peg to support an article such as a baby bottle, wherein said apparatus can conveniently be folded for packaging and storage purposes.

- 2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said pegs are mounted to said tray in such a manner that no standing water may collect at a point where a peg is mounted, thereby minimizing potential for mold and bacterial growth.
- 3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said pegs are mounted to said tray in such a manner as to be movable only about a single axis of rotation.
- 4. An apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising means for imparting lateral stability to said pegs, further deterring any motion other than about said single axis of rotation.
- 5. An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said means for imparting lateral stability to said pegs comprises at least one axle joining adjacent pegs together for common, ganged movement about a common axis of rotation.

6. An apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising location means for locking said axle in a rotational position that corresponds to said second operative position.

- 7. An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said location means comprises means, connected to said axle, for frictional engaging said upper surface of said tray.
- 8. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a collection reservoir defined in said tray for collecting any liquid that might run out of articles such a baby bottles during drying.
- 9. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising disk holding means, connected to said upper face of said tray, for holding baby bottle disks in a location that is isolated from areas of said tray in which liquid may collect.
- 10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said disk holding means comprises an upstanding boss member that is raised from said upper face of said tray, and a plurality of disk-receiving slots defined in said boss member.
- 11. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of ring support members that are constructed and arranged to support a ring portion of a baby bottle.
- 12. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said ring support members include a stop member for supporting a ring member above and out of contact from said upper face of said tray.
- 13. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said nipple support members are mounted to said tray in such a manner as to be movable between a first storage position, wherein said entire nipple support member is positioned relatively close to said upper face for storage and packaging

of said apparatus, and a second, operative position, wherein said nipple support member is positioned at a large angle with respect to said upper face.

- 14. An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said nipple support members are mounted to said tray in such a manner as to be movable only about a single axis of rotation.
- 15. An apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising means for imparting lateral stability to said nipple support members, further deterring any motion other than about said single axis of rotation.
- 16. An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said means for imparting lateral stability to said nipple support members comprises at least one axle joining adjacent nipple support members together for common, ganged movement about a common axis of rotation.
- 17. An apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising location means for locking said axle in a rotational position that corresponds to said second operative position.
- 18. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a cutout area on a side of said apparatus for facilitating lifting of said apparatus by a user.
- 19. An apparatus for drying and storing an article, such as a baby bottle, comprising:
- a tray having a bottom face that is adapted to be supported by an underlying surface such as a counter-top, and an upper face;

bottle support means for supporting a baby bottle; and

disk holding means, connected to said upper face of said tray, for holding baby bottle disks in a location that is isolated from areas of said tray in which liquid may collect, whereby

baby bottle disks are and stored in a safe manner at a location that is convenient to a location at which baby bottles are being dried.

20. An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said disk holding means comprises an upstanding boss member that is raised from said upper face of said tray, and a plurality of disk-receiving slots defined in said boss member.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus for drying and storing an article, such as a baby bottle, after washing and rinsing includes a tray having a bottom face that is adapted to be supported by an underlying surface such as a counter-top, and an upper face. A plurality of pegs extend out from the upper face, and each peg is sized and arranged so as to be able to support an article, such as a baby bottle, after washing and rinsing. Each peg is mounted to the tray in such a manner as to be movable between a first storage position, wherein the entire peg is positioned relatively close to the upper face for storage and packaging, and a second, operative position. This permits the apparatus to be conveniently folded for packaging and storage purposes. Another aspect of the apparatus involves disk holding structure, connected to the upper face of the tray, for holding baby bottle disks in a location that is isolated from areas of the tray in which liquid may collect. This permits baby bottle disks to be dried and stored in a safe manner at a location that is convenient to a location at which baby bottles are being dried.

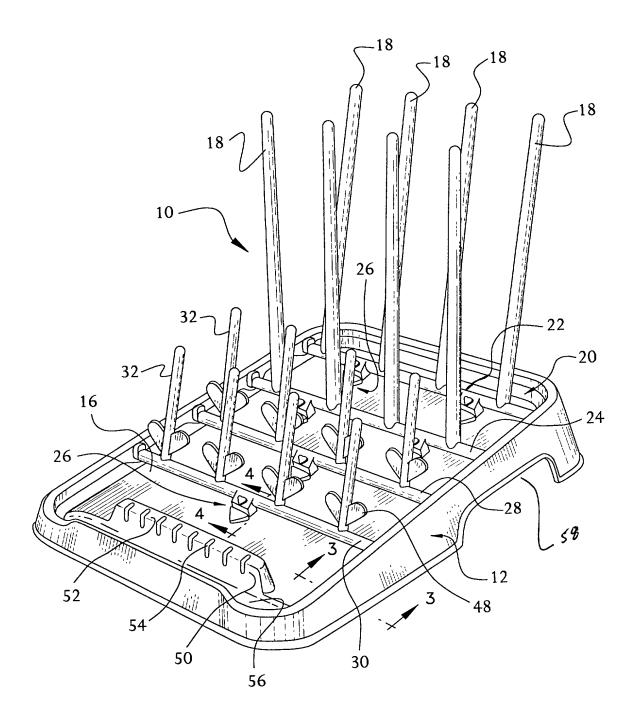


FIG. 1

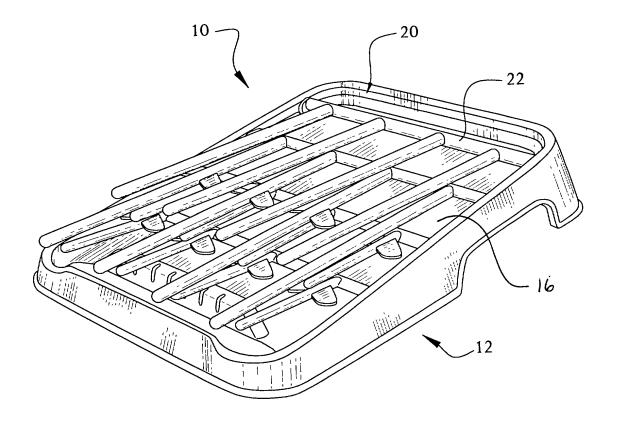
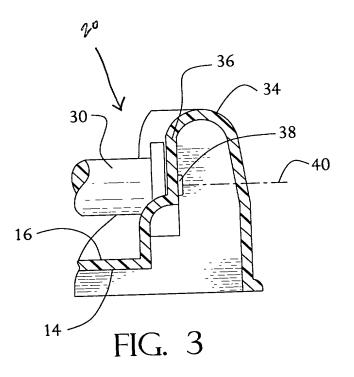


FIG. 2



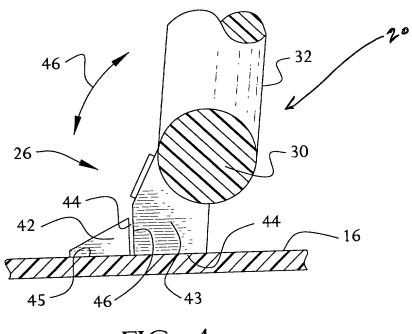


FIG. 4

Docket No.
MBI-1008US

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

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intra lumi	the specification of which			
	(check one)			
	☑ is attached hereto.			
	was filed on	6	as United States Application No.	or PCT International
	Application Number			
	and was amended on			
æi Nj			(if applicable)	
	I hereby state that I have re including the claims, as amo		and the contents of the above i Iment referred to above.	dentified specification,
	I acknowledge the duty to a known to me to be mater Section 1.56.	disclose to the Unite ial to patentability a	d States Patent and Trademark s defined in Title 37, Code of	COffice all information Federal Regulations,
	Section 365(b) of any fore any PCT International appli listed below and have also	ign application(s) for cation which designation identified below, by International applic	Title 35, United States Code, repatent or inventor's certificate ated at least one country other the checking the box, any foreign a ation having a filing date before	, or Section 365(a) of han the United States, pplication for patent or that of the application
	Prior Foreign Application(s)			Priority Not Claimed
	(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
	(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
	(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	u

I hereby claim the benefit under application(s) listed below:	35 U.S.C. Section 119((e) of any United States provisional
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	_
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	_
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	_
Section 365(c) of any PCT Internation insofar as the subject matter of each United States or PCT International at U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge Office all information known to me	nal application designating the of the claims of this a application in the manner the duty to disclose to the to be material to patental to between the filing date of	of any United States application(s), or ing the United States, listed below and, application is not disclosed in the prior or provided by the first paragraph of 35 in United States Patent and Trademark ability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., of the prior application and the national

(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. (list name and registration number)

John L. Knoble Ken I. Yoshida

Registration No. 32,387 Registration No. 37,009

Send Correspondence to: John L. Knoble

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4. ===

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John L. Knoble (215) 599-0600

Full name of sole or first inventor Steven B. Dunn	
Sole or first inventor's signature	Date
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Citizenship US	
Post Office Address Same as residence	

Tor H. Petterson	Data
Second inventor's signature	Date
Residence 96 Yacht Harbor Drive, Rancho Polos Verdes, CA 90275	
Citizenship US	
Post Office Address Same as Residence	

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